DID THE 1946-1947 OFFERINGS AND PRACTICES OF SELECTED ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOLS OUTSIDE COOK COUNTY MEET STANDARDS FOR JUDGING ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS AS SUGGESTED IN THE LITERATURE OF ADULT EDUCATION?

BY

KENNETH JONES FRASURE

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AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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URBANA, ILLINOIS
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THE DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

I. Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to find the answer to the following question: Did the 1946-1947 offerings and practices of selected Illinois high schools outside Cook County meet the standards for judging adult education as suggested in the literature of adult education? This question is answered by dividing it into four parts.

A. What standards for judging adult education programs are suggested in the literature?

B. What were the adult education offerings and practices of selected Illinois high schools outside Cook County during 1946-1947?

C. To what extent did the 1946-1947 adult education offerings and practices of selected Illinois high schools meet suggested standards for judging adult programs?

D. What should be the next steps in improving adult education offerings and practices in Illinois high schools?

II. Delimitations

There are differences of opinion among the contributors to the literature as to what the suggested standards of adult education should be. The standards listed are based upon the work of writers, some of whom used research as a basis for their statements and some of whom have not stated the basis for their generalizations. The standards set forth here are largely founded upon the writings of authors who have achieved authoritative status by virtue of having done considerable writing in the field. The works of the National Education Association groups and the American Association of Adult Education are also considered authoritative for purposes of this discussion. Only a few writers in this field have dealt directly with the standards of adult education. The suggested standards should be regarded as guides to evaluating adult education programs rather than as validated standards, even though the references used indicate that these standards are desirable.

The literature selected is concerned with high school offerings and practices. The study does not include emphasis upon veterans' education, junior college, nor university extension offerings. These same limitations will be found in the questionnaire study.

It is recognized that questionnaires do not always get the information for which they were designed. There may have been omissions and some of the questions may have been improperly or incorrectly interpreted by the schools replying. Such a situation shows that when findings

are interpreted the deficiencies should be borne in mind. On the other hand, information may be economically obtained by a questionnaire with a minimum expenditure of time and energy. When questionnaires are well constructed on suitable topics and when they are filled out by professionally competent persons the reliability and validity are greatly increased.

The questionnaire is limited to those recognized public high schools of Illinois outside Cook County. It is further limited to those high schools offering adult education opportunities during the school year 1946-1947. Data concerning offerings and practices are set forth by size of school. It is beyond the scope of the study to classify the data according to such things as the geographical location of schools, per capita wealth of the school district, illiteracy ratio, principal occupational pursuits of adults in the school district, or the length of time the program has been in continuous operation.

III. Definitions

Adult education. Adult education as used here indicates the educational activities sponsored by the public school system and carried on by people engaged in the ordinary business of life and who are not attending regular high school or college classes. It does not include veterans' education, junior college offerings, nor university extension courses.

Program. Program when used in connection with adult education means classes and other learning activities offered by the school for the adults of the high school district.

Illinois high schools. This means those 670 public high schools in Illinois outside Cook County that were sent return postal cards. These schools are shown in the University of Illinois Bulletin, *Report of the Committee on Admissions from Secondary Schools*, for the year 1945-1946.

Selected. Selected points to the fact that not all high schools of the state were studied. It refers to those schools that had an adult education program and were willing to answer a questionnaire.

Suggested standards. These words refer to the materials selected from the literature as a basis for indicating the consensus, which in the opinion of this writer was acceptable to the leaders in the field.

Size of school. The schools are divided into four sizes according to the number of regular high school students enrolled. The enrollment figures on school size indicate the number of high school enrollees and are not concerned with the number of adult students. The enrollments are divided into school size as follows: Schools with 100 students or fewer are listed as size A; those with 101-200 students enrolled are

called size B; those with 201-500 students are shown as size C; and schools enrolling over 500 students are size D.

IV. Procedures

A. Literature

In locating the literature used as a basis for this study the writer consulted *The Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, The Education Index,* the card catalogues in the University of Illinois Library, published bibliographies, and references suggested by persons well acquainted with the field of adult education. Notes were taken from those sources dealing with offerings and practices. After considerable reading the materials began to fall rather naturally into certain categories such as staff, advisory councils, instructional programs, and miscellaneous items. When the suggested standards for judging adult education programs had been formulated, the literature was re-examined to locate desirable sources. These sources were studied and utilized in the discussion of the literature. During this process it was found necessary to modify many of the suggested standards. Every effort was made to discard excessive and irrelevant information.

B. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was then constructed covering the points discussed in the section on literature. After careful investigation it was decided that a postal card study would eliminate considerable useless work and expenditure. The postal cards were sent to all the accredited public high schools of Illinois outside Cook County. Accredited high schools were those listed in the University of Illinois Bulletin, *Report of the Committee on Admissions from Secondary Schools,* for the year 1945-1946. The returned cards indicated which schools had adult education courses, which schools would answer a questionnaire, and the general nature of the offerings. All of the schools stating that they had adult education courses and would answer a detailed questionnaire were selected from the returned postal cards. After the postal card returns had been received and the questionnaire modified in the light of comments by six persons engaged in teaching, the revised questionnaire was taken to two schools with adult education programs of the kind included in this study. When the information had been supplied, the persons giving data were asked to indicate sources of difficulty in interpreting questions asked. The necessary changes were made and the questionnaire was mailed to the schools selected. Six of these schools were visited and the questionnaire was filled out during visitation. The information was then set forth in accordance with size of school. Inter-

pretations given are mainly comparisons of results obtained from schools of one size to those of another size or to the total of all the schools studied.

C. Comparison

The findings of the study of the literature and the questionnaire results are utilized to form brief statements comparing suggested standards to offerings and practices.

D. Conclusion

In the light of the comparison between the findings set forth by the discussion of the literature and the results obtained from the questionnaire study, suggestions are made as to possible next steps for the development of adult education in Illinois public high schools.

What Standards for Judging Adult Education Programs Are Suggested in the Literature?

The suggested standards for judging adult education programs are as follows:

A. The superintendent should appoint a suitable person with sufficient time to direct the adult education program.
B. Supervision of adult education should be flexible and should provide for in-service training.
C. Coordinated guidance and counseling services for adults should be provided.
D. Teachers of adults should be well qualified.
E. An advisory council should be set up to work with the adult education program.
F. Adult education should provide a lifelong opportunity for each person to learn to live more effectively and wisely through understanding and enlightenment.
G. Adult education methods should make provision for varied activities and procedures suited to the educational ends to be attained.
H. The public should be kept well informed of adult education opportunities if the program is to attract and hold students.
I. Adults should be given stimulation and freedom of choice in selecting courses.
J. Adult education should be accessible and pleasant and should be coordinated with other activities of the community.
K. School plants should be built to accommodate adults as well as children and should be utilized to capacity.

L. There should be cooperation between local agencies and the state and national organizations in order to insure satisfactory progress and adequate finances for adult education.

What Were the Adult Education Offerings and Practices of Selected Illinois High Schools Outside Cook County During 1946-1947?

Only one Illinois public high school out of five replying to the postal card survey stated that it had an adult education program. Persons with the title of principal or teacher were responsible for administering most of the adult education programs in the sixty schools replying to the questionnaire. Nearly three-fourths of the schools reporting had less than three different persons teaching adult classes. No school under 500 enrollment employed more than four teachers of adults. Adult programs for the most part had little local supervision aside from that given by the principal. Not many schools provided a counselor for adults. A large portion of Illinois high schools made no load adjustments for full-time high school teachers who taught an adult class. Yet, nearly all of the adult classes offered by high schools were taught by full-time high school teachers. The usual rate of pay for teaching an adult class ranged from $2.00 to $4.00 per hour. Only large high schools spent more than $500.00 per year for the teaching of adult classes and most of the schools spent less than $200.00 per year. Several schools permitted persons not teaching regular high school classes to teach adults.

Advisory councils were used more by small schools than by large schools; however, a little less than half of the schools had adult advisory councils. Most schools used only one advisory council with from three to twenty members. Small schools usually elected advisory council members, whereas large schools appointed them. Nearly all of the schools reported that advisory councils were helpful. The contributions most often made by councils were: improving attendance, increasing enrollment, and keeping instructors informed of student opinion.

A large part of the programs of adult education reported in Illinois high schools had for objectives the increasing of vocational knowledge and skill and improving the community attitude toward the school. Lectures, demonstrations, and group discussions were widely used instructional methods. Educational movies, film strips or slides, and bulletins or monographs were the most widely used instructional materials. It was common practice to require ten enrollees before a course was offered. Newspaper publicity and personal letters or invitations were the chief mediums of publicity. The type of courses given in order of

frequency were: home economics, industrial, agricultural, and commercial. However, it should be noted that the many veterans' classes in agriculture were not included in this study. Only one science class, two history classes, and one general forum were listed by the schools.

Some adult offerings other than classes were sponsored by nearly all schools. P.T.A., open house, and school bulletins were the most frequently reported opportunities. Schools were fairly liberal in permitting organizations to use their buildings, but they varied considerably in their policy as to which groups might use the buildings and as to the amount of rental. Approval for the use of school buildings was usually granted at the discretion of the principal.

The things with which many schools needed help or information regarding their adult programs were arousing interest, finding instructional materials, obtaining finance, helping public relations, reducing teacher load, and obtaining qualified teachers. Most of the programs in large schools have been in operation longer than those in small schools.

Although the legal right of Illinois boards of education to levy taxes for the education of adults is questionable, many communities held adult education classes as a part of the high school program. Student fees for adult classes were required by only one-fourth of the schools.

Most of the schools reported that their adult program had increased vocational knowledge and skill as well as created a better attitude toward the school. Accomplishments attributed to the adult program checked rather closely with objectives.

To What Extent Did the 1946-1947 Adult Education Offerings and Practices of Selected Illinois High Schools Meet Suggested Standards for Judging Adult Education Programs?

In twenty-one of the sixty Illinois high schools studied the principal or superintendent delegated responsibility for the administration of the adult education program of the school. There was little indication of adequate supervision of adult education. Eight schools employed a person other than the principal who spent more than 10 per cent of his time in supervision of the adult education program. There was little provision for guidance and counseling services for adults; eight schools signified that they employed a person who spent more than 10 per cent of his time in counseling adults. One school spent over $2500 on adult education. There were scarcely no well-paid positions for persons devoting full time to the teaching of adults. Such a situation is not conducive to attracting well-qualified teachers. Twenty-eight schools

provided an advisory council to work with the adult education program. During 1946-1947 relatively few persons were reached by adult education courses under the sponsorship of the public schools included in this study; one hundred fifty-seven out of 197 courses enrolled thirty students or less. Needs and wants of adults in the vocational field were not adequately met. A total of 161 courses of the vocational type were offered. Other needs and wants were given little consideration in most adult education programs; thirty-six non-vocational courses were offered. Available resources for building public interest in adult education were used by the schools reporting. Freedom of choice in selecting courses was not provided by most schools since few courses were offered. Adequate efforts to determine the adult education needs and wants were not in evidence. Adult education offerings were reasonably accessible and pleasant since fewer than five adults withdrew from 103 courses. School plants were utilized to a limited extent for adult education offerings. Community, state, and national aid were used for vocational education courses but local taxes and student fees supported other aspects of the program. Student fees were charged by one school out of four. An inadequate amount of money was spent for adult education by Illinois public high schools during 1946-1947.

What Should Be the Next Steps in Improving Adult Education Offerings and Practices in Illinois High Schools?

A. Suitable personnel to provide training for teachers of adults and adequate service to schools is needed.

B. Every effort must be made to develop a few excellent programs of adult education to serve as examples.

C. Opportunities for learning adult education methods are essential.
   1. In-service training opportunities for teachers of adults as well as regular units and courses for prospective teachers are imperative.
   2. Workshops and adequate supervisory aid are needed as part of in-service training programs.
   3. Every prospective teacher should have a course which includes some study of adult education.
   4. Those individuals who plan to teach adults must have the opportunity to take several courses in the field.

D. Fundamental research concerning the educational needs of adults in Illinois is essential.
   1. Unless educational needs are known it is impossible to decide intelligently what offerings should be made available.

2. The adult education program of an area is not likely to render maximum service to adults in the area without a suitable foundation in research.
3. The adult educational needs of the people differ in each state, in each locality, and among individuals.

E. A broader concept of education must be fostered to include adult education.

F. A democratically planned, coordinated, and executed program of adult education ought to be developed on a state-wide basis.

G. Advisory councils or lay committees need to be used freely at the local level.

H. The public must be kept well informed and its ideas or suggestions welcomed.

I. Federal and state finances ought to be made available for adult education.

J. The use of local taxes for the support of adult education must be given a firm basis.

K. School plants should be adapted to and equipped for the use of both children and adults.

VITA

Kenneth Jones Frasure was born in Jefferson County, Illinois, August 20, 1917. He attended the Waltonville Grade School and was graduated from the Mt. Vernon Township High School in 1934. He was graduated from the Southern Illinois Teachers College, Carbondale, Illinois, in 1937 with the B.Ed. degree. He received his M.A. degree from the University of Illinois in 1940 and his M.Ed. degree from the same institution in 1945. After graduation from college, he was employed in several Illinois high schools as a teacher of English and history and as principal or superintendent. During the years 1946 to 1948 he was Assistant Principal in University High School at the University of Illinois. He is a member of Kappa Phi Kappa, Kappa Delta Pi, and Phi Delta Kappa.

The author has written articles as follows:

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